

# Waterbury Democrat.

VOL. XV. NO. 50.

WATERBURY, CONN., MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3 1902

PRICE TWO CENTS.

## WATERBURY SCOURGED BY FIRE!

### Scores of Buildings and Many of the City's Foremost Business Men Suffer Greatly.

### Flames Were Fanned by a High Wind and Spread Despite the Efforts of the Firemen.

### Loss Will Probably Reach \$2,500,000---All Is Confusion At Present and It Is Almost Impossible to Get the Facts---Good Work of the Out-of-Town Companies in Conjunction With the Local Department Prevented a Bigger Conflagration.

By far the most disastrous fire in the history of Waterbury was discovered about 6:20 o'clock last evening in the block occupied by Reld & Hughes, Bank street dry goods merchants. It had gained considerable headway before an alarm was sent in and the flames were shooting in all directions when the big gong at the Connecticut Lighting and Power Co's plant gave seven screams which attracted eyes towards the center. The firemen responded with great promptness and as soon as Chief Snagg saw the situation he sent in a general alarm. Streams of water were poured onto the burning building, but they seemed to add to its fury, and the fierce wind which was blowing at the time drove the tongues of fire across the street, and before some people realized what was up the old American building across the way was ablaze and small pieces of burning timbers were whirling in all directions giving things the appearance of a sharp shower of fire and brimstone.

At this juncture, realizing the seriousness of the situation, Mayor Kilduff and Chief Snagg held a hurried conference, and concluded to call assistance from outside towns, and immediately the mayor put himself in communication with the authorities at Naugatuck, Watertown, Torrington, Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven. All the towns mentioned responded, some of them coming equipped with the best apparatus they had, and considering the magnitude of the conflagration and the difficulty the combined companies had in checking its progress, it must be plain to all that had it not been for the aid received from neighboring towns the entire city in and around the city would have been wiped out. Mayor Kilduff also communicated with Governor McLean regarding the calling out of the militia and the governor wired Colonel Geddes to call out Companies G and A.

After the receipt of the communication from the governor an alarm was sounded calling out the militia. Colonel Geddes assigned the soldiers to different places about the burning districts for the purpose of saving property which had been carried out of the burning structures and also to keep back the surging throng that had become so large and impatient that it was thought best to take steps to control them.

The wind was blowing at a rapid rate and by 9 o'clock, despite the heroic efforts of the great army of firemen, the flames worked their way from the starting point across to South Main street, opening up an avenue in a direct line from Reld & Hughes' store to Brook street, and going in the other direction along Grand street to Leavenworth street, eating up the Franklin house and all the magnificent buildings along the line, including the plant of the Waterbury American. The collapse of some of the larger brick structures made a tremendous noise, the dull thud caused as they came to the ground being heard on the outskirts of the city. This was especially so when the New England Engineering Co's and the Boston Furniture Co's came down.

Viewed this morning, the scene is one long to be remembered. Bank street, both sides, from the spot where Reld & Hughes' building stood to a point almost opposite Center street, is in ruins. The street is impassable to teams, and men and women who venture past a given point are met by a soldier, with rifle in hand, who promptly shouts "Halt!" If the person has any rights inside the line he is allowed to go ahead and if not he is turned back. Almost all the buildings within the point mentioned are blackened masses of charred and burning timbers, with giant iron pillars

and a few huge safes strewn here and there. The network of wires scattered about renders the work of the firemen doubly difficult and not infrequently a fellow becomes entangled in them and tips over. The same thing might be said of South Main street, east side, from a point opposite Scovill street to Fenner's, and on the opposite side from the corner of Scovill street to the store occupied by Thomas Kelly, the baker. Some of the buildings here are burned through to Brook street, but the fire did not get beyond that point. Most of the property in the rear of Reld & Hughes is destroyed, and curiously enough the Scovill house caught fire and is a total wreck.

Some of the principal buildings in ruins are Reld & Hughes, Jones, Morgan & Co., J. B. Mullings, the Franklin house, the Hampson-Sellw Furniture Co., American Publishing Co., the Boston Furniture Co., the Masonic temple, the O'Connor building, occupied by Ryan & Fitzmaurice, Cannon & Webster, the Greenberg block, the Schiltz building opposite Scovill street, The Bolan block on Bank street is standing, but gutted.

#### GRAND STREET

The question of damages is variously estimated at between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000. One man told a Democrat reporter that the damage to buildings would not exceed \$1,000,000 and that he did not think all the other damages would exceed another million. This is the most conservative estimate heard on the streets. The New England Engineering Co's building on Grand street cost about \$300,000. It was occupied by the New England Engineering Co, Griggs & Hunt, architects; E. E. Benedict, architect; Monarch Speed Limit Stop Co; Metropolitan Insurance Co; Mercantile Collection agency; C. E. Farnham, music teacher; W. G. Smith, agent; Dr. Moyer; Waterbury Land Title and Guarantee Co, and the offices of Attorneys Root, Peasley and Thoms. It is said that damage to property in the building will amount to \$25,000 or \$35,000. All the occupants were insured with the exception of Mr. Benedict and Mr. Farnham.

The Franklin house, owned by the Milford Land and Cottage Co, was valued at \$40,000. The proprietor, W. H. Oatley, bought the furniture a short time ago for \$9,000. He carried insurance to the amount of \$3,500. The Jacques block, occupied by A. F. Taylor & Co and the United Gas Improvements Co, and eight families in the upper stories, was partially insured. The damages to the building and contents is roughly estimated at about \$40,000. The Ashward, Banaon and Judd blocks, occupied by the Lapalme-Hoffman Co, the Hampson-Sellw Furniture Co, and the Hamilton Hardware Co are a total loss. The buildings and contents were worth in the neighborhood of \$200,000. The plant of the Waterbury Evening American and other property on Grand and Leavenworth streets, said to have been worth half a million dollars, was insured in the Factory Mutual Insurance Co. The Fitzpatrick block, directly west of the American building, is minus the upper story. It will cost about \$2,000 to make such repairs as will be necessary. The fire broke out again in this building about noon, and it may be completely destroyed.

#### BANK STREET, EAST SIDE.

The flames, which seemed to be engaged at being confined to one side of the street, shot across the narrow width of Bank street and at once began their deadly work on the buildings on that side. The Reld & Hughes building was a seedling child of the flames and the wind, which had increased in force, fanned the flames and sent the sparks and burning pieces of wood flying in all directions. The awnings on the opposite side at once ignited and soon the cry went up from the thousands of people present to save the other side of the street and let the burning building suffer. The firemen made gallant efforts to stem the progress of the fire, but the flames could not be forced back and slowly, but

surely they began to lick up the buildings on the east side of Bank street and then it became apparent to the spectators that a conflagration was in progress that it would be difficult to stay.

Directly opposite was the old building at one time occupied by the American and known as the old American building. That the flames should first seize on this building seemed peculiar when later the new American building had to suffer the loss of total destruction. This building was occupied by the Waterbury Candy company, L. Simons & Co and W. M. Cotel, the florist, on the ground floor. Up stairs on the other floors were many tenants and John Charters, who had many dollars worth of decorations stored there. A barber shop was on the second floor and several offices. The building was owned by Charles Miller of the firm of Miller & Peck. The estimated worth of the property was \$200,000 and it was insured for two-thirds of that sum.

The O'Connor block, next to the old American building, was the next to become ablaze. On the first floor of this building was located the firm of Ryan & Fitzmaurice, shoe dealers. The first floor was soon a burning furnace and the occupants of the floors above made a hasty exit, leaving their belongings to the mercy of the flames. Ryan & Fitzmaurice had a stock of \$13,000, with fixtures valued at \$1,500. The firm will lose \$5,000 as they had insurance of only \$9,000. The firm had secured a store in the Thatcher building on Center street and will at once secure a new stock and continue business until the block burnt out is rebuilt.

On the upper floors of this building lived Miss Mary O'Connor, the school teacher. Nothing was saved from her apartments and a small insurance was on the furniture, Joe Martucci, the tailor, also suffered in this building and his loss is complete, as he had no insurance. Another family also lived in the building and they lost about everything.

Below the old American building came the Paul Asheim cigar store and barber shop conducted by Ernest Steeler. Marcus & Co, the milliners, the Curtis Art company and Hall the jeweler also occupied quarters on the first floor. On the second floor were the offices of the O'Neills, Attorney Russell and Nelson J. Welton. They were wet slightly by the streams played into the building, but aside from that the damage was very slight. J. G. Jackie & Co, down on the first floor, were not damaged to speak of. A little water went into the store, but none of the goods was injured.

Bohl's block was not reached by the flames, and all efforts were concentrated in keeping the fire away from that corner. The Manufacturers' bank which occupied quarters on the first floor of this block, prepared for the work of the flames. They locked all the valuables in the vault and removed all the papers which they thought might be injured if the fire reached there. The only inconvenience the bank suffered was the loss of fire this morning. The water had entered the cellar and prevented the boilers from working. Apothecary had did not suffer a little bit from either fire or water.

Next south of that was the building occupied by the Police Art company. Dr. Walters, the dentist and four families occupied the floors above. The doctor was insured, but the families are said to have been not insured. The Pollak company carried some insurance, but it is estimated their loss will be between \$4,000 and \$5,000.

The next blocks were saved because of the alley way which ran between them and the burning buildings, and by reason of the heroic efforts made by the fire department, who kept men on the roof of the D. T. Hart building and played a stream of water continually on the burning building north. The Pollak building was the last building burned on the south part of Bank street.

North of the old American building the flames had gained good headway and they began to wreck the stores in that vicinity. J. B. Mullings & Son was soon filled with flames and the building was doomed. The fire shot out from the front and the rear and the flames mingled on South Main street with those coming from the burning buildings below. The Mullings building was soon a mass of fire and up the stairs shot the flames and the handsome barber shop of George Kleeber was next ablaze. The Senate pool rooms on the same floor were soon gutted and up to the roof sped the fire. The Jackson Printing company and Jackson and Cassidy, attorneys, were on the third floor and they were soon in the midst of the flames. On the top floor the quarters occupied by the American band, while the band losses were very heavy, as many instruments had been stored there. The loss in the J. B. Mullings store will amount to \$50,000, and is partially covered by insurance. Kleeber, the barber, was covered with insurance, but the 200 cups and other private barber supplies in the shop will have to be borne by the individual owners.

Next south of the Mullings building was the Cannon & Webster company.

There were several explosions in this place, which increased the alarm and added to the excitement. When that building collapsed there was a sigh of relief, because it was not known just how much explosive material was stored in the basement. Dr. Gates had quarters above the store, and above him was Johnson's hall, in which many organizations held their meetings and had their books and papers stored. All were covered with insurance, with the possible exception of the societies.

Above the J. B. Mullings building was the office of the City Lumber and Coal company, and over that office was the insurance office of John G. Jones. Down in ruins went both places, and with them went many records, very valuable and prized.

The flames now leaped into the Upson & Singleton plant and again did the deadly work commence on this clothing stock. The flames burned with fury and the firemen fought them in vain. Up to the roof they sprang, and the whole building was soon enveloped. Bronson & Dennison, insurance agents, Miss Dwyer Bush, the milliner, G. M. Chapman, electric supplies, W. B. Copley, the optician, Gesner, the milliner, George Wright, the broker, Miss MacCauley's dressmaking establishment, S. Forman's workshop and the Ziglatzki & Marks store room were all on the floors above, and down they went to the cellar with the rest. Upson & Singleton suffered a loss of \$35,000, and they were fully covered by insurance. The others were partly covered by insurance.

The pretty store of the W. L. Douglas Shoe company was next licked by the flames, and then began a terrific fight by the firemen to hold the fire at this point and let it go on further. It was being played from the corner of the Apothecary building. The strenuous efforts made by everybody stopped the fire at this point and all who witnessed it breathed a sigh of relief, for if it had ever reached the Apothecary block, there is no knowing where it would have stopped. Douglas & Co had a stock of \$15,000 and the insurance will not cover the loss.

The block above this one was occupied by Grand Union Tea company, and while this store was not damaged by fire, the stock was ruined by water, which flowed through all parts of the building. On the floors above were the offices of the O'Neills, Attorney Russell and Nelson J. Welton. They were wet slightly by the streams played into the building, but aside from that the damage was very slight. J. G. Jackie & Co, down on the first floor, were not damaged to speak of. A little water went into the store, but none of the goods was injured.

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#### BANK STREET, WEST SIDE.

The west side of Bank street from the building occupied by the American Brass company and George A. Judd to P. J. Bolan's hardware store, is one mass of ruins. Bare walls standing where on Sunday afternoon were flourishing business houses. The loss of property on that side of the street has not been estimated.

Lilley building-Reld & Hughes, who occupied two floors; Waterbury Business college; Prof. C. A. Bailey dancing academy; Young Men's Catholic Literary association.

Milford Land and Cottage company building-Jones & Morgan company; clothing; Samuel B. Hill, photographer; William O. Beecher, dentist, and the French Canadian Institute.

Bronson building-Davis & Nye, stationers; Miss Mary A. O'Brien, dressmaker. Masonic Temple building-Driggs & Smith, music dealers; Root & Boyd, insurance and real estate dealers; Atwood & Goodrich, insurance and real estate dealers; Masons' meeting room and social quarters; John W. Mahony, dentist. Of the five above mentioned places not a stick was left that can be turned to any use. The street is strewn with their debris.

The damaged buildings are: P. J. Bolan's, which was occupied by Mr. Bolan and P. R. Patzold, dentist; E. U. Lathrop's building, occupied by Lucy B. Erbe, dentist. The Waterbury National bank company, owner of the building adjoining the bank occupied by George A. Judd; insurance and real estate dealer; Alfred G. West, optician. R. Rasmussen, florist, the building situated on the corner of Center and Bank streets, owned by E. U. Lathrop and occupied by the Sanderson Bros. clothing, E. G. Holden, tailor, and the Rembrandt photograph gallery.

The Young Men's Catholic Literary association estimate their loss at \$1,500. Their loss consists mostly of books and papers, many of which were of value.

#### SOUTH MAIN STREET

Mrs. Eveline T. Morris of 192 Prospect street was one of the heaviest losers by the fire. She owned three buildings on South Main street. The one occupied by the Boston Furniture company was completely gutted by the fire. This building was valued at \$30,000. The building next to the Boston Furniture company was owned by Mrs. Morris and was occupied by Kelly, the baker, on the first floor, L. Trudell, the furrier, second floor, and George Panneton, the carriage maker, the third floor. The roof of the building was damaged considerably by the fire. Only for good work by Messrs. Trudell and Panneton with a hose on the interior of the building, this building would have also been burned. Kelly's loss is \$1,000, fully insured. Trudell's loss, \$2,000, fully insured. Panneton's loss, \$200, entirely insured. These damages were incurred by fire and water. There was about \$300 to \$500 damages to the building, which is covered by insurance. The building next to this one was also owned by Mrs. Morris. The roof of this building was slightly damaged. The building was occupied by the Outlet Clothing company and the Central boarding rooms, conducted by Mrs. M. A. Dunn. The Outlet clothing company's loss was \$2,000 due to smoke and water. Fully insured. Mrs. Dunn's loss was about \$300 owing to fire and water. The insurance will cover this.

Hutchins & Remington, hardware dealers, occupied their entire building on South Main street. Mr. Templeton stated that the firm would lose \$500 by damage caused by water and smoke. The above sum is a complete loss. Fire broke out several times in this building, but prompt work by the firemen prevented the fire from making any headway.

Edward McGrath, ex-inspector of schools, was one of the heaviest losers on South Main street. Two buildings occupied by him were ravaged by the blaze. The building situated at the corner of South Main and Scovill streets was one of his buildings. This building was occupied by Nugent's pharmacy and by T. F. McGrath, the cigar manufacturer. The interior of this building is completely gutted, but the walls are standing. The other building belonging to Mr. McGrath was on the opposite side of the street and was occupied by a fur company. John Edmondson, the undertaker, and a family whose names could not be ascertained. This building is a complete ruin. Mr. McGrath estimates his damage at \$40,000. The loss is partially covered by insurance.

The building owned by Thomas Guest, the liquor dealer, was damaged to the extent of \$200 or \$300 by smoke and water. There are three tenants in the building and they are occupied by the families of M. J. Hickley, S. Freedman and I. Weinstein. They suffered but little damage and this was caused by smoke and water. All the losses in this building are covered by insurance.

P. T. Hayes reports a loss of about \$500 on his building on South Main street. This sum includes all damage to his building, including his saloon and restaurant, by water and smoke. There was little or no damage by fire. The third and last floor of the building was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. John Gallagher. They moved their furniture early in the evening. Their loss is very small.

The building belonging to the Schiltz brothers of Milwaukee was damaged to the extent of \$18,000 or \$20,000. It is partly insured. The first floor was occupied by the Schiltz cafe, which was bought at the beginning of the year by G. Taylor, who estimates his loss at \$1,500. He has insurance to the amount of \$1,000. The

third floor was occupied by Mrs. Alice Teater, her son and four boarders. They lost almost everything and their loss will be between \$800 and \$1,000. There was \$500 insurance on the furniture. The second floor was occupied by a family who removed their furniture long before the building caught on fire. They suffered little loss and had no insurance.

The damage to the block on South Main street belonging to John A. Lilley, secretary of the Valentine Boli Co, is estimated at from \$18,000 to \$20,000. The entire rear of this building is entirely gutted. The building was rented by the Calender Brothers, who conduct a half time lunch room on the first floor and rented the 28 rooms on the other floors to boarders. Mr. Calender places his loss at \$5,000. The insurance is about one-half of that sum. Nearly everything of any value in the building was burned. The boarders lost about everything they possessed.

Edward McGrath's two-story block at the corner of South Main and Jefferson streets was occupied by Nugent's pharmacy and by T. F. McGrath, the cigar dealer. The loss to the former store is estimated at about \$8,000, which is partly covered by insurance. T. F. McGrath's loss is about \$5,000. Mr. McGrath has just moved into these headquarters and it is said that his insurance was not transferred.

(Hartford Courant.)

The news of the terrible visitation of fire last night to Waterbury soon spread about the city here. The first idea of the extent of the blaze came with the appeal for help to the Hartford fire department. About the same time Governor McLean, who was in the city, heard the news. The governor at once tried to get in communication with Adjutant General George M. Cole. Not being able to reach him immediately the governor promptly acted on his own volition and wired Lieutenant Colonel James Geddes of the Second regiment, C. N. G., who lives in Waterbury, to call out Companies A and G of the regiment, or such members as were necessary to aid in guarding property. The governor has made many visits to Waterbury and has a warm spot in his heart for the town. He expressed great sympathy for the people there in their present misfortune.

The Hartford fire department was not lax in its response to the call for help. It was shortly before 10 o'clock that the call came for help to Chief Eaton. He at once ordered out No 5 and called for volunteers to go with her to Waterbury. At the same time Superintendent Daniel Rendett of the Consolidated road was notified and he had a flatcar backed in on the switch at Asylum street. There was some little delay at No 5's house, owing to the necessity of drawing off the water. The engine was soon on the way to the switch where it was to be loaded. The news of the departure of a company from here for the scene of the fire had spread very rapidly and simultaneously with the arrival of the engine and hose wagon at the switch there came several hundred people to watch the loading. It took just thirty-five minutes to place the skids and draw the heavy engine on to the flatcar that had been provided. The hose wagon was drawn up and blocked as soon as the engine was in place.

It was just 10:40 o'clock when the train consisting of the flatcar and a coach for the firemen drew up on to the main tracks and was ready to be shifted to the Highland division. In the coach were Captain Marchant and seven men. There were many others willing to go in the party. In fact a number of young men, who had heard that volunteers were wanted, tried eagerly to get in the coach. Chief Eaton stopped this by declaring that the party was not going on a pleasure trip and all he wanted was firemen. He called off the names of those who were to go and ordered them into the coach.

The last trip out of the city made by a company from Hartford was about five years ago, at the time of the New Gilmore hotel fire, at Springfield. Then as now rapid work was done in loading and getting the engine away.

H. S. Chase feels the loss of the American plant as keenly as he would that of his best friend. "It is not the money value," said Mr. Chase, "but the destruction of a building, a memorial to journalism, in which we were all so deeply interested."

#### SCOVILL HOUSE FIRE

##### Guests Awakened and Had to Fly For Their Lives Without Being Able To Save Any of Their Belongings---Work of Rebuilding Begun.

About 4 o'clock, amid the shrieking of the wind and the hissing of the flames and crash of falling walls and timbers and heavy iron from the fire alarm started in another and unexpected quarter. The Scovill house was in flames. Immediately word was sent along the lines of perspiring and dripping firemen to abandon their posts and assemble at the scene of the new fire. All that could be done along the line of conflagration on Grand street was done or doing. The fire had been long in check and the men took their hose pipes to the Scovill house. From the scene that met their eyes here, it seemed as if the building and all its contents and occupants were doomed. And there is no doubt but that many would have been seriously injured if lives would not have been lost, but for two men, City Clerk M. J. Ryan and Thomas F. McMahon, clerk of the board of charities. These were in the city hall preparing for an emergency. Instantly they alarmed the occupants of the Scovill house, which happened to be crowded with visitors who had been routed from other hotels by the fire, and the regular guests, Mr. Ryan and Mr. McMahon ran through the corridors of the building, shouting the alarm, and rapping upon the doors, and in a few moments throngs of men and women were feeling for their lives. Many did not wait to collect their personal effects. Some lost their way through the dense clouds of smoke and had difficulty in recovering the right exit. The smoke confused people and almost suffocated one man and one woman. A police officer, whose name appears to have been lost in the confusion, had a wrangle with this man trying to save his life. The man insisted in returning to his room to get one shoe, and but for the officer would unquestionably have done so and lost his life. The officer gathered the obstinate man in his arms and bundled him out to the fresh air.

The fire is said to have started in many places, but official opinion holds its source was in the pool room in the basement. Reports has it also that it was incendiary, but Mr. Truman, the manager, in a conversation with the authorities, did not give expression to such a belief. He seemed to be completely prostrated by the catastrophe. All of his personal property is lost. The amount he was unable to calculate at present. Very soon after the alarm was sent in it became evident that it would be fruitless to attempt to save the building, therefore all efforts were directed toward confining the fire to the hotel. In this the firemen were successful, and too much credit cannot be given them. Had the fire effected connection with any of the other buildings with which it formed a whole square, the loss of property would be tremendously increased. Nothing could save the Lawlor building, on the corner of Harrison avenue and Exchange place, or the Hodson building near by, had they caught to the slightest extent. The damage done to the neighboring building was done by water. Drescher & Kiehl's cafe was inundated. Michael McEvoy's cafe is also somewhat damaged. Baby's fruit store is slightly damaged. Cone's drug store escaped and Hodson's safe and billiard room are somewhat damaged also. The general loss at these places will not amount to very much. Not a stick was left of the Scovill house. The furniture was insured for \$8,000.

The work of tearing down the Scovill house was begun this morning. A force of men from the roof of the city hall worked a battering ram against the tottering walls of the ruined hotel and by this means removed three or four chimneys that shivered with every breath of wind. It is the intention of the hotel company to again rebuild as soon as possible. The total loss in this building is not yet known. Many of the guests lost considerable personal effects of much value. H. H. Peck is one of the principal sufferers in this respect.